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# INTRALINGUISTIC VARIATION IN THE EXPRESSION OF MOTION EVENTS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH

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**Abstract** – The present analysis focuses on Talmy's well-known lexicalization patterns for the expression of motion events (Talmy 1985, 2000). Languages are divided according to the preferred pattern they use; English, a satellite-framed language, encodes manner in the verb and path in a satellite (*The bottle floated into the cave*), whereas Spanish, a prototypical verb-framed language, encodes path in the verb, and manner in an adverbial or gerundive element, *La botella entró a la cueva flotando* (the bottle moved-in to the cave). Recent studies show that languages may show both encoding options (Beavers 2008, Beavers et al. 2010, Filipovic 2007, Croft et al. 2010, *inter alia*). In this paper I analyze corpus examples of verb-framed patterns in English and satellite-framed constructions in Spanish, and compare them to the preferred pattern in the other language. It is argued that the different rhetorical structure of each lexicalization pattern conveys a significant difference in meaning. This may explain why both encoding options co-occur within one language type.

**Keywords:** motion events, Satellite-Framed languages, Verb-Framed languages, English, Spanish

## 1. Introduction

The way languages express motion events across languages has been intensely debated during the last decades. Talmy proposes two main typologies: Verb-Framed (VF) languages and Satellite-Framed (SF) languages. VF-languages (Romance, Semitic, Japanese, Korean, Turkish, Tamil, Polynesian, Nez Perce, and Caddo) encode path in the verb, and manner in an adverbial or gerundive element, (1). SF-languages (Indo-European except Romance, Finno-Ugric, Chinese, Ojibwa, and Warlpiri) encode manner in the verb and path in a satellite, (2) (Talmy 1985, 2000).

- (1) La botella entró a la cueva (flotando).  
(the bottle moved-in to the cave)
- (2) The bottle floated into the cave. (Talmy, 1985)

Although Spanish is generally cited as a prototypical VF language, which does not admit the SF pattern (Aske 1989, Slobin 1996, Jackendoff 1990, 1995, Mora 1999, *inter alia*), some exceptions have been mentioned. Aske (1989, p. 3) claims that some Spanish examples “contradict Talmy's formulation that Spanish doesn't have manner-plus-motion verbs with path complements.” He argues that Spanish only bans SF constructions with telic path phrases, but it allows atelic paths, as in:

- (3) La botella flotó hacia la cueva. (Aske 1989)  
(The bottle floated towards the cave)
- (4) El libro se deslizó hasta<sup>1</sup> el suelo. (Aske 1989)  
(The book slid down to the floor)

Martínez Vázquez (2001) and Fábregas (2007) claim that some Spanish manner of motion verbs, *caminar* (walk), *correr* (run), *saltar* (jump), *nadar* (swim), *volar* (fly), *remar* (row), take telic path phrases, as in the following examples:

- (5) Caminó a su cortijillo sin esperanza en la vida... (Martínez Vázquez 2001)  
(he walked to his farmhouse without hope in life)
- (6) Nadó a tierra y caminó a través de la isla de Soledad. (Martínez Vázquez 2001)  
(he swam to land and walked across the isle of Soledad)
- (7) Volaron a Mar de Plata. (Martínez Vázquez 2001)  
(they flew to Mar de Plata)

Slobin & Hoiting (1994) and Slobin (1997) specify that Romance languages do not allow telic path phrases in which a boundary is crossed. But examples of SF patterning in boundary-crossing situations have been attested in different Romance languages:

- (8) Saltó a otro taxi. (Martínez Vázquez 2001)  
(s/he jumped into another taxi)
- (9) Max a couru dans sa chambre / au magasin.  
(Max ran into his room / to the shop) (Cummins 1996)
- (10) Gianni è corso nel bosco in un secondo.  
(John IS runPAST into the woods in one second) (Folli & Harley 2006)

Recent studies provide growing evidence of SF-patterns in VF-typologies and vice versa (Beavers 2008, Beavers et al. 2010, Filipović 2007, Croft et al. 2011, *inter alia*):

[T]here are more and more mentions of what might appear to be instances of the prototypical S-framed pattern in V-framed languages, including French, Italian, and Spanish, all considered ‘strongly’ V-framed (Alonge 1997; Martínez Vázquez 2001; Stringer 2003, 2006; Baicchi 2005; Folli & Ramchand 2005; Zubizarreta & Oh 2007; Gehrke 2008; Kopecka 2009). Beavers et al. (2010, p. 349)

In this paper, I contribute corpus data that show that in certain contexts speakers of Spanish may prefer the use of SF to VF constructions. A question that needs to be addressed is why a language user would opt for this deviation from the VF typology. The present study seeks to explain the reasons that lie behind this choice. This paper is organized as follows: Section 2 analyses corpus examples of VF constructions in a SF language (English). Section 3 illustrates SF lexicalization in a VF language (Spanish).<sup>2</sup> Section 4 explains the rhetorical meaning of each pattern, and discusses the pragmatic factors influencing the selection of the anti-typological patterns attested. Finally, Section 5 offers conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> Aske claims that *hasta* is atelic, “the final location is not asserted, though it certainly may be implied” (Aske 1989, p. 7). I will address this issue in section 3.

<sup>2</sup> The data in this paper have been extracted from the CREA (*Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual*) and the COCA (*Corpus of Contemporary American English*) in 2012. For the sake of clarity some examples have been shortened.

## 2. Verb-framed typology in SF languages: the case of English

English uses the VF typology with the Romance borrowed verbs it contains. However, these verbs are generally disregarded as non-native-like. Frawley (1992), for example, circumscribes the VF pattern to formal English:

The difference in encoding between Spanish and English apparently holds only for colloquial speech. More formal English does have a number of verbs that inherently express the path, *ascend*, *descend*, *enter*, *join*, *cross*, though these are all borrowed from French, which is like Spanish. (Frawley 1992, p. 178)

Francis & Kucera (1982) also consider verbs like *enter*, *exit*, *ascend* and *descend* borrowings from French with quite an infrequent occurrence.<sup>3</sup> Likewise, Talmy remarks that these verbs “are not original English forms but rather borrowings from Romance, where they are the native type” (1985, p. 72).<sup>4</sup> He adds that these path verbs “are not the most characteristic of English”. However, Talmy’s definition of “characteristic” as *colloquial*, *frequent* and *pervasive* (1985, p. 62) does not completely rule out a verb like *enter*, which is quite prolific in English. The verb *enter* shows higher productivity than *walk in/into* in the COCA corpus.<sup>5</sup> Besides, it is also frequently used to express figurative, (11), rather than physical motion, (12). It is also used in transitive-causative constructions, (13), exceeding, thus, the range of usage of manner of motion verbs like *walk in*, and also showing more flexibility than the Romance cognate, which only allows the intransitive pattern (cfr. Spanish, *entró en la casa*, or French, *il est entré à la maison*).

(11) Nobody enters the full Christian faith without the aid of a preacher. (COCA)

(12) As Ryan entered the room... (COCA)

(13) Create an account at [explore.delorme.com](http://explore.delorme.com), enter a list of contacts (COCA)

Besides, *enter* is not limited to formal English; it has a significant number of appearances in the five genres represented in the COCA corpus, including spoken and popular magazines, which contain informal language. Since the verb *enter* is not restricted to the expression of physical motion, searches were run in the COCA corpus for the description of a specific physical manner of motion event: movement into a room. Two phrases were searched for: *enter the room* and *walk into the room*. The first appeared 1044 times, while the number of occurrences of the latter was 325. If we compare their distribution among the five genres in the COCA corpus we find that both are most frequently used in fiction. As expected, the SF pattern shows a low productivity in academic English (only 5 examples), while the VF pattern is less frequent in spoken language (38 examples). However, as shown in table 1, the latter is well represented in another informal genre, popular magazine (104 occurrences).

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Naigles et al. (1998, p. 524).

<sup>4</sup> However, notice that the common source of Romance languages, Latin, is a SF language (Talmy, 2000).

<sup>5</sup> The number of tokens of the verb *enter* in the COCA corpus is 62061, while that of *walk into* is 7868, and *walk in*, 8355.

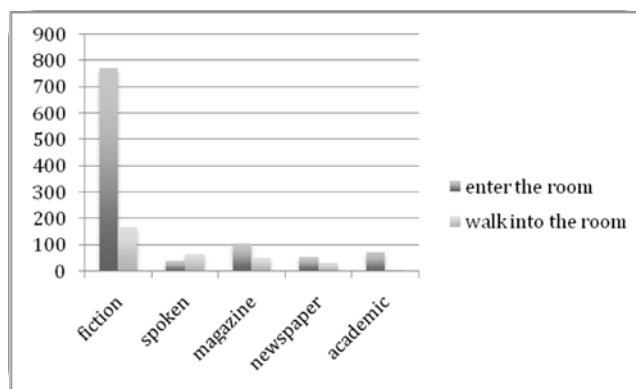


Table.1  
Frequency of *walk into/enter the room* in different genres (COCA)

In sum, the verb *enter* shows significant productivity and should not be considered alien to English. Besides, as Beavers et al. (2010) point out, there are other more colloquial path verbs like *rise*, *fall* and *sink*, which do not usually admit a SF construction counterpart. Moreover, “deictic path verbs such as *come* and *go* are no less path verbs than *enter* and *exit*” (Beavers et al. 2010, p. 350). Aske (1989, p. 6) acknowledges these VF patterns in English and concludes: “English has already become a lot more like Spanish.” In fact, Beavers et al. (2010, p. 351) claim that this holds for all SF languages: “most S-framed languages have path verbs, thus allowing V-framed encoding options.”

### 3. SF typology in VF languages: the case of Spanish

As already noted, boundary-crossing events have been claimed to disallow manner verbs in Romance languages (Slobin & Hoiting, 1994, Slobin, 1997). Slobin (1997) notes that crossing a boundary implies a change of state, and VF languages express resulting states as independent predicates:

It appears to be a universal characteristic of V-languages that crossing a boundary is conceived of as a change of state, and that state changes require an independent predicate in such languages. (Slobin 1997, p. 441)

In the same line, Naigles et al. (1998)'s analysis of elicited data suggests that speakers of Spanish use both path and manner verbs in similar proportions, but they keep to path verb constructions when there is “some combination of resultative-ness and boundary crossing”. According to them “neither event type alone accounts for the data as well as the two together” (Naigles et al. 1998, p. 543).

While English has inherent path preposition *–to, into, onto, away from, out of, off–* which clearly mark the result of a motion event (Zwarts, 2005), Spanish, like other Romance languages, lacks unambiguous telic path prepositions. This lexical limitation is crucial to explain the poor productivity of SF constructions. Since most manner of motion verbs do not express directionality, and there are no prepositions inherently expressing path, the possibilities of establishing a directional interpretation at the lexical domain in Spanish are quite limited.

Spanish *a* may take a directional or a locational reading. In fact, some researchers argue that Romance *a* is inherently locative (Jones 1983, 1996, Cummins 1996, Fábregas 2007 and Folli & Ramchand 2005, *inter alia*) and the directional reading derives either

from the verb or from contextual information. According to Fábregas (2007, p. 178) Spanish *a*, like Italian *a*, and French *à*, is not a path but a locative preposition, which “denotes the contact between the figure and a part of the ground”, similar to English *at*.

It is problematic to posit an inherent meaning for such a versatile preposition. Notice that *a* can also express temporal relation, *a las diez* (at ten), or even manner, *a caballo* (on horse). Its polysemous nature makes it context-dependent. As Beavers (2008, p. 311) remarks, *a* in Romance languages is also used to mark verb arguments, for example, the indirect object in dative constructions. Spanish *a* also marks human direct objects, a function unique to Spanish.

Moreover, *a* varies considerably across Romance languages. Beavers et al. (2010, p. 342, note 7) indicate that “Spanish *a*, unlike its French and Italian cognates, predominantly shows directional rather than locational uses.” As Demonte (2009) convincingly argues, Spanish *a* is not comparable to French *à*:

- (14) \*Juan está a la casa. / Jean est à la maison. (Demonte 2009)  
(John is at home)

Beside these crosslinguistic dissimilarities, other interlinguistic differences should be noted. For example, *a* is used in American Spanish with goals which are predominantly introduced by *en* in Castilian Spanish.

- (15) Teresa entró a la casa. (CREA: Mexico)  
(Teresa entered TO the house)  
(16) Pedro Reche entró en la casa. (CREA: Spain)  
(Pedro Reche entered IN the house)

Another preposition that is used with paths in Spanish is *hasta*. Aske (1989) claims that *hasta* does not introduce telic path phrases. However, Martínez Vázquez (2001) notes that in a sentence like (17) *hasta* suggests that an endpoint is reached. Fábregas also argues that with *hasta* a goal is attained, in clear contrast to *hacia*. He illustrates this aspectual distinction with the examples reproduced as (18) and (19); *empezar a* ‘begin’ can take an atelic path phrase, as in (18) but the presence of *hasta* in (19) makes the sentence telic, hence ungrammatical with atelic *empezar a*.

- (17) ...la muchacha nadó hasta la roca y se vistió. (Martínez Vázquez 2001)  
(the girl swam up to the rock and got dressed)  
(18) Juan empezó a correr hacia su casa. (Fábregas 2007)  
(Juan started to run towards his house)  
(19) \*Juan empezó a correr hasta su casa. (Fábregas 2007)  
(Juan started to run to his house)

Stringer (2002) observes that French manner verbs do not combine with *à*, but they are allowed with *until*:

- (20) \*La fille a dansé à la gare. (Stringer 2002)  
(The girl danced to the station) (\*danced to)  
(21) La fille a dansé jusqu’ à la gare.  
(The girl danced to the station) (danced until)

He considers *until* a problem to the generalization that VF languages obligatorily use path verbs with bounded paths. But he claims that *until* is essentially temporal –even though it

may extend metaphorically to space– and it indicates a limit to the duration of the event not to the path.

Beavers (2008) argues that Spanish *hasta* like French *jusque*, or Japanese *-made*, are delimiters rather than goal markers. As such they offer different delimitation uses: temporal, *hasta las diez* (until ten), spatial *desde el suelo hasta el techo* (from the floor to the ceiling), or propositional, *hasta que el avión llegó* (until the plane arrived). Certainly, *hasta* delimits time, place, actions, or quantities, according to the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española*, but it can also denote inclusiveness (like the original Arabic form *ḥattá*), as in *canta hasta cuando come* (s/he sings even when s/he is eating). Not surprisingly this inclusive reading of the conjunction shows up in its prepositional use, as in examples (22) and (23), where *hasta* functions as an emphatic substitute for *a*: “even up to”.

- (22) Niomi, que sólo había viajado fuera del Reino Unido en excursiones veraniegas, voló hasta Jamaica, Suecia, Miami o Nueva York. (CREA)  
(Niomi, who had only traveled outside the UK in summer trips, flew even up to Jamaica, Sweden, Miami or New York)
- (23) Voló hasta Argentina, para inaugurar esta clínica. (CREA)  
(s/he flew even up to Argentina, to inaugurate this clinic)

Beavers et al. (2010) observe that *until*-markers are not goal markers and, unlike them, “cannot be used to introduce results” (2010, p. 346) as shown in (24) with Japanese *-made*. However, Spanish *hasta* may introduce results, as shown in examples (25) and (26).

- (24) #Mary-ga doresu-o pinku-made someta.  
Mary-NOM dress-ACC pink-until dyed  
(Mary dyed the dress pink.) (#Result) (Beavers et al. 2010)
- (25) Retozamos hasta el cansancio. (CREA)  
(we frolicked until tiredness)
- (26) Todos fueron quemados hasta la muerte. (CREA)  
(they were all burnt until death) (burnt dead)

In fact, Beavers et al. (2010) also acknowledge that although *until*-markers have a general delimitation use, when they are used with motion events they are conceived as goals:

The precise form of delimitation is inferred from the nature of the event and the complement of the *until*-marker; when a motion predicate takes a delimiter with a ‘place’ as complement, the inference is that the complement names the endpoint of the path of motion, i.e. it is understood as the goal. Thus, although *until*-markers are not goal markers per se, their use in motion events qualifies as S-framed behavior, since the goal is expressed via a PP. (Beavers et al. 2010, p. 346)

In sum, although Spanish lacks prepositions with an inherent goal meaning, *a* and *hasta* may introduce an endpoint with a manner of motion event in an appropriate context. In order to explain these uses, we need a finer-grained analysis of the telic element in manner of motion events.

Filipović (2007) develops further Slobin's boundary-crossing concept. She distinguishes three different situation types: boundary-crossing, boundary-reaching and



non-boundary-crossing.<sup>6</sup> Following previous research, she points out that Romance languages do not accept the boundary-crossing manner of motion lexicalization pattern, but this constraint does not hold for boundary-reaching events:

The systemic restrictions (e.g. the impossibility of using manner verbs in verb-framed languages) seem to apply only when boundary-crossing needs to be expressed, not when the boundary is reached or non-existent. (Filipović 2007, p. 40)

Boundary-reachable goals are certainly more acceptable with manner verbs in VF languages than those involving boundary-crossing situations (though the latter, as illustrated in examples (8), (9) and (10) are not impossible). Thus, Spanish *hasta*, or French *jusque*, which introduce a boundary-reaching path, are widely accepted with manner of motion verbs. Fábregas (2007) claims that *hasta* is accepted with all manner of motion verbs.

#### 4. Rhetorical meaning SF constructions

A crucial aspect to explain the formation of SF patterns in Romance languages is the rhetorical significance of the construction. For the last two decades, Slobin has carried out research on the difference in rhetorical style in the cross-linguistic expression of motion (Berman & Slobin, 1994, Slobin, 1996, 1997, 2000, 2003, 2006). Berman & Slobin observe a rhetorical difference in the elicited narratives of users of the two typologies:

[I]t seems—at least in our data—that English and German narrations are characterized by a great deal of dynamic path and manner description, while Spanish, Hebrew, and Turkish narrations are less elaborated in this regard, but are often more elaborated in description of locations of protagonists and objects and of endstates of motion. (Berman & Slobin 1994, pp. 118-119)

Speakers of Spanish tend to use bare path verbs, which only supply directionality (Slobin, 1996, p. 200). A reason for this is that speakers of VF languages have fewer lexical repertoires for the expression of locative and manner details than users of SF languages; hence, less choice for manner expression (Berman & Slobin, 1994; Slobin, 1996, Slobin 2006, *inter alia*). Slobin quantifies this difference:

The satellite-framed languages that I've examined—English, German, Dutch, Russian, and Hungarian—each have several hundred manner verbs; Mandarin has perhaps 150; Spanish, French, Turkish, and Hebrew have less than 100, and probably less than 60 in everyday use. (Slobin 2006, p. 12)

Moreover, the encoding of path in a satellite leaves the verb slot open for this rich variety of manner verbs available in SF languages (Slobin 2000, p. 110). Speakers of SF languages need to fill a gap with additional information. As a result, manner is more “available” for SF language speakers:

The domain of manner-of-motion is highly codable in S-languages not only because it tends to be expressed by single lexemes rather than phrases, . . . , but also because the free expression

<sup>6</sup> On the temporal axis, Filipović (2007, p. 38) distinguishes three types: *change-occurred*, *moment-of-change* and *no-change*.

of manner as a main verb in all types of directional clauses greatly increases its frequency of use. Therefore, in terms of thinking for speaking, the domain is more available in S-languages. (Slobin 2000, p. 111)

VF language users are not required to add anything else apart from path. Besides, if manner is added it must be coded as a gerundive or manner phrase, which is more difficult to code and, as Talmy (1985) observes, generally perceived as “stylistically awkward”. This awkwardness explains why manner is often “established in the surrounding discourse or omitted altogether”. (Talmy 1985, p. 69)

The consequences of this manner encoding awkwardness in VF patterns, once mixed behavior within typologies has been acknowledged, deserve further investigation. Let us start with illustration in a SF language. As Talmy (1985, p. 122) remarks, while the prototypical English SF pattern in (27) presents manner as background information, the same information, “transit by air”, is “pivotal” if expressed outside the verb complex, as in (28).

(27) Last year I flew to Hawai. (Talmy 1985)

(28) Last year I went to Hawai by plane. (Talmy 1985)

Furthermore, Croft et al. (2010, p. 13) note that English motion events are only expressed in SF constructions, “except for path verbs borrowed from Romance (*enter*, *exit*, *ascend*, *descend*)”, which “do not sound acceptable with satellite expressions indicating manner” (2010, p. 13):

(29) \*?The bottle entered the cave floating.

(30) \*?He approached the door crawling.

(31) ??She crossed the street running. (Croft et al., 2010)

Besides, though (28) allows the phrase “by plane”, in a restricted context where manner is at issue, a gerundive would not be felicitous:

(32) \*?Last year I went to Hawai flying.

In sum, though English users have two options for the encoding of motion events, SF and VF patterns, the latter do not admit the addition of manner phrases, except with some prepositional phrases in very specific contexts, as in (28), where manner is salient information.

Interestingly, the same arguments apply for the encoding of certain motion events in a VF language: Spanish. Since Spanish, as Talmy claims, has “almost no productive satellites” it expresses path in the verb while “any other expressed component is forced into the foreground in a gerundive or prepositional phrase.” (Talmy 1985, p. 123). But in Spanish, like in English, it is not always possible to force manner into a VF construction. For example, in (33) manner encoded in a gerundive phrase is as unacceptable as it is in English, (32), and the use of a *by*-phrase expressing the means of transport is acceptable in both languages, (34) and (28). According to the mainstream typological view, Spanish cannot express backgrounded manner in the description of motion events; it either encodes manner saliently, as in (34), or leaves the information to be inferred, as in (35). However, there is a third option, which resembles the English preferred pattern, which is (or has become) equally acceptable in Spanish, (36), where manner is kept as backgrounded information.



- (33) ?El año pasado fui a Hawai volando.  
(last year I went to Hawai flying)
- (34) El año pasado fui a Hawai en avión. (foregrounded manner)  
(last year I went to Hawai by plane)
- (35) El año pasado fui a Hawai. (manner inferred or in discourse)  
(last year I went to Hawai)
- (36) El año pasado volé a Hawai. (backgrounded manner)  
(last year I flew to Hawai)

Let us consider now the unacceptable English VF sentences presented by Croft et al. (2010), reproduced as (29), (30) and (31), and compare them to their translation into Spanish, (37), (38) and (39), respectively.

- (37) ?La botella entró a la cueva flotando.
- (38) Se acercó a la puerta gateando.
- (39) Cruzó la calle corriendo.

Although (37) has been repeatedly cited as the preferred pattern in Spanish, the sentence does not sound natural. Leaving apart the fact that the situation it describes is highly unnatural, this sentence is awkward because manner is highlighted in a gerundive, *flotando*, when it is the default manner of motion of a bottle on water. The alternative SF pattern is not an option because it would tend to be interpreted as locative, (40). But in a proper context the same pattern may also obtain a directional interpretation. For example, (41) felicitously describes a scientific experiment in a river; (42) makes sense in reference to the displacement of cancer cells; and (43) is acceptable in a shipwreck context.

- (40) La botella flotó dentro de la cueva.  
(the bottle floated in the cave)
- (41) Los camarones que flotaron dentro del tubo morirán.  
(the prawns that floated into the tube will die)  
([www.naturalinquirer.org/modules.php](http://www.naturalinquirer.org/modules.php))
- (42) Las células pueden flotar dentro del torrente sanguíneo.  
(cells may float into the bloodstream)  
([www.cancerquest.org/index.cfm?page=2584&lang=spanish](http://www.cancerquest.org/index.cfm?page=2584&lang=spanish))
- (43) Las cosas sueltas del barco flotaron a la superficie.  
(loose things from the boat floated to the surface)  
([crucerosenlacapitaldearousa.blogspot.com.es/2012/11/el-mikhail-un-buque-olvidado.html](http://crucerosenlacapitaldearousa.blogspot.com.es/2012/11/el-mikhail-un-buque-olvidado.html))

The acceptability of (38) and (39) is also dependent on context. Since they apparently do not make reference to a conventional situation, manner can be made salient in a gerundive in these examples. But, if the figure in (38) has been characterized as moving on all fours (an injured person or a baby who cannot walk yet) then an SF pattern, as in (44), would be a better choice. Likewise, in reference to a runner in a race (39) would drop the gerundive.

- (44) Obstinado, el niño gatea hasta la puerta y asoma la cabecita. (CREA)  
(stubborn, the boy crawls to the door and sticks out his head)

The previous examples show that the VF information structure works in a similar way in both languages (typologies); there is no room for the gerundive in the VF English pattern, and Spanish only allows it when manner is new information, either because it is not conventional or because it has not been made explicit in the previous linguistic context.

Let us turn now to the SF encoding option. Some scenarios involve a conventional manner of motion, therefore, if it is expressed, it must be encoded as non-salient information. For example, jumping is the natural manner of motion of some animals, and a

conventional way of going over a gap. In these situations, manner is not marked information and is, thus, felicitous in verbal position, as in (45) and (48). In fact, this would be the preferred pattern for the description of such events, because if this neutral information is encoded in a manner phrase it becomes unnecessarily salient, as in (46) and (49). The use of a bare directional verb with omission of manner would also be meaningless, (47) and (50).

- (45) La gata saltó a su regazo. (CREA)  
(the cat jumped onto her lap)
- (46) ?La gata fue a su regazo saltando/de un salto.  
(the cat went onto her lap jumping/of a jump)
- (47) ?La gata fue a su regazo.  
(the cat went onto her lap)
- (48) Saltó al piso del balcón vecino. (CREA)  
(s/he jumped to the floor of the neighboring balcony)
- (49) ?Fue al piso del balcón vecino saltando/de un salto.  
(s/he went to the floor of the neighboring balcony jumping/of a jump)
- (50) ?Fue al piso del balcón vecino.  
(s/he went to the floor of the neighboring balcony)

Consider another scenario: self-agentive motion on water. In order to conceive of a directed motion scene we need to imagine a piece of land, or any other type of limit in the water that a person can reach. In such scenarios, swimming or diving would be the expected manner of motion. Therefore, it would not make sense to highlight this information in a gerundive phrase, *ir nadando/buceando* (go swimming/diving); instead, a SF pattern is preferred, as in the following examples:

- (51) El marinero saltó del barco y nadó a la orilla. (CREA)  
(the sailor jumped from the boat and swam to the shore)
- (52) Si quisiéramos bucear al fondo deberíamos bajar unos 5 km. (CREA)  
(if we wanted to dive to the bottom we should go down around 5 km)

When manner is not salient, the SF pattern offers the possibility of expressing this information, presenting thus a richer description than with the VF gerund-less pattern. This more detailed description should be favored in certain genres. For example, sentence (53), extracted from a novel in the CREA corpus, describes a car accident scenario where the driver, severely injured after falling down a cliff, manages to climb back to the road. If manner is encoded in a gerundive phrase, as in (54), it acquires a heavy undesired prominence, and if it is left unexpressed, it may go unnoticed, (55). The narrator wants to enrich the description of this scene with significant manner detail about the effort employed to obtain the resulting location. In this context, the SF pattern, (53), offers a better option than the VF patterns, (54) and (55).

- (53) Cuando logré reptar hasta la carretera. (CREA)  
(when I managed to climb to the road)
- (54) Cuando logré llegar a la carretera reptando.  
(when I managed to get to the road climbing)
- (55) Cuando logré llegar a la carretera.  
(when I managed to get to the road climbing)

There is another rhetorical aspect favoring the choice of SF patterns in Spanish. In the non-salient verbal slot a manner verb loses semantic prominence, which gives easy way to a figurative, lighter use of the verb. This metonymic usage of some verbs compensates a

poor repertoire of manner verbs. For example, the verb *volar* (fly) originally refers to the motion of birds and other winged animals, as in (56). Since manner is here the natural manner of motion, it is encoded in the verb. But this backgrounded position facilitates the emergence of metonymic meanings. Thus, in (57) the verb loses some of the original facets of meaning to denote the uncontrolled motion of an object in the air. In (58) and (59), *fly* is used as a source domain to refer to fast manner of walking.

- (56) La abeja voló fuera. (CREA)  
(the bee flew outside)
- (57) Era un reloj de plata de dos tapas, que voló al suelo. (CREA)  
(it was a twin lidded silver watch, which flew to the floor)
- (58) Toda la familia voló al piso de arriba. (CREA)  
(all the family flew to the upper floor)
- (59) El chino tomó nota y voló a la cocina. (CREA)  
(the Chinese man took notes and flew to the kitchen)

Notice that this figurative lighter sense that the verb may gain in verbal position is not always acceptable in a foregrounded gerundive phrase, where it tends to be interpreted in its original meaning, which would make it unnecessary information in (60), and would not match the intended travel or metonymic senses in (61) and (62), respectively.<sup>7</sup>

- (60) ?La abeja salió volando. (how else?)  
(the bee went-out flying)
- (61) ?Fueron a Barcelona volando.  
(they went to Barcelona flying)
- (62) ?El reloj cayó al suelo volando.  
(the watch fell to the floor flying)

Similarly, the verb *flotar* (float) in (63) activates only the idea of light displacement in the air to describe the manner of motion of a light weighted woman. In (64), the verb *escurrirse* (slip) loses its unintentional sliding sense to express furtive self-agentive motion.

- (63) La mulatica flotó hasta el refrigerador y abrió la puerta. (CREA)  
(the little mixed-raced woman flew to the refrigerator and opened it)
- (64) Cuando los vio desaparecer, se escurrió a la cocina, que le pareció el sitio más seguro. (CREA)  
(when s/he saw them disappear, s/he slipped away into the kitchen, which seemed to her/him the safest place)

In sum, in order to appear as backgrounded information in verbal position the manner verb has to be neutralized, either in reference to a conventional scenario, or inferred from anaphoric reference. Alternatively, the loss of some semantic components through metonymy facilitates the creation of manner of motion verbs suitable in the description of some directed motion events. This unmarked manner is compatible with a directed motion reading, because it is no longer perceived as a second event, but rather as a manner detail added to the path event, similar to what Slobin proposes for SF languages. According to Slobin (2000) SF language speakers do not think about manner and motion as two different concepts; but rather as “a single conceptual event, making it difficult to have a

<sup>7</sup> When the figure is a human being, the self-agentive motion construction may add a homonymous adverb *volando* which means ‘immediately or very fast’, as in *Toda la familia fue al piso de arriba volando* (all the family went to the upper floor immediately).

mental image of one without the other” (2000, p. 132). He suggests that VF language speakers give minimal mental attention to manner of motion,<sup>8</sup> and have “rather different conceptualizations of manner when it is in focus” (Slobin 2000, p. 133). In my proposal, since VF patterns cannot express canonical unmarked manner, non-salient manner is given no encoding attention. When manner is marked, it appears as a gerundive and is interpreted as a second predicate. However, when VF language speakers chose SF encoding they view the construction as a “single conceptual event”, just as speakers of SF languages do. So, both SF and VF language speakers perceive SF constructions in the same way.

To sum up, the rhetorical structure of the SF pattern suggests a single complex event while the VF pattern implies two predicates. This difference in the way SF and VF patterns are conceived is independent of the language type employed.

## 5. Concluding remarks

The SF pattern is used in Romance languages under certain circumstances. Since Spanish lacks inherent goal prepositions, it is difficult to establish a directional sense with a manner of motion verb, but in certain contexts a goal is naturally inferred with some manner verbs, allowing thus the formation of a SF construction.

The rhetorical structure plays an important role in the lexicalization of SF constructions in VF language types, like Spanish. Under a strict typological perspective, users of Romance languages only have the VF pattern available, which would force them to either express manner saliently, or omit it. If this were the case, then there would be an important expressive gap in VF languages, since they would not allow the addition of non-salient manner information in the expression of directed motion events. Though this might be the general tendency, I have contributed corpus data that prove that the SF pattern is available, and occasionally a better choice than the VF pattern in Spanish.

<sup>8</sup> It should be remarked that Slobin’s research aims at the “*habitual* means of encoding used by speakers of a language” (2006, p.183 note 2, emphasis mine) in search for evidence of linguistic relativism. He also acknowledges the formation of SF types in VF languages, as *Corrí a la calle* (I ran to the street), though he notes that they are “relatively infrequent” (2000, p. 110).

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